



THE WESLEYAN

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Ad Astra per Aspera

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Foreword

GREETINGS to the Goddess of
Spring who comes in a chariot
of balmy haze, drawn by warm
breezes, and bedecked with bud-
ding green and coloring flowers,
bearing in her upward-reaching,
lily-white hands the velvety blue
of the sky!

Among the Contributors

The Wesleyan wishes to welcome in her Spring issue her new friends, many whose names have never appeared among her pages. Miss Katherine Silknitter presents a very cleverly worked out play concerning a subject which is so familiar to us all. Another delightful play is "The Bluff" by Miss Lillian Pafford. Miss Pafford has given us a vivid and amusing plot of an old theme treated in a new way.

Miss Elizabeth Anderson, a frequent contributor of last year, has given us "Fantasy" in which she looks into the mind of girl and gives us her thoughts in a very striking manner. "A Balm for Misery", by Miss Cornelia Merritt, has an unexpected denouement which is always welcomed by readers. With a few words Miss Merritt has shown us the pathos present in a life.

Lavender adds to its contributors Miss Marion Brown, Miss Ida Woodward and others, who wish to remain unknown for the present. Miss Brown's poetry is full of originality and has a beauty all its own.

Miss Martha McCowen has dealt with the character of Browning in an understanding and sympathetic manner and has presented us with a picture which arouses admiration and appreciation.

In "Slender Fingers" we have a touch of the poetic found so often in the work of Miss Ida Young.

Miss Hazel Austin is now managing the exchanges in place of Miss Dixie Jones who found it necessary to resign. We welcome Miss Austin to the Wesleyan Staff.

Spencer Jack, newly elected Associate Business Manager, has already shown her ability along this line, and we feel sure that she will be a valuable member of the Staff.

Everygirl

A MORALITY PLAY

By KATHERINE SILKNITTER

Dramatis Personae

Everygirl
Library
Pharmacy
Pocket-Book
Theatre
Tennis-Court
Swimming-Pool
Faculty

Exam

Messenger

Here begins a treatise of how the
Faculty sends Exam to every
college girl, and is
in manner of a
moral play.

(Enter Messenger as a Prologue).

Messenger: The herald doth loudly
proclaim

The opening of our play.

The name of it is merely called
"The Reckoning of Everygirl".

We hope you'll lend to it

A very attentive ear

For we are sure that you will learn

That if Exam is rightly met

He proves a boon and not an ogre.

Faculty: (Looking around the campus.) I see the different girls walking here and there, with their books clasped under their arms or a tennis racquet grasped in their hands. Happy, care-free girls they are! I wonder if they realize how much I want to help them. Caught in the mad whirl of this modern life, they are prone to forget me and how greatly I can help them. I labor far into the night planning lectures to aid them; I make outlines for them; but sometimes they forsake me.

Everygirl lives so much for her own pleasure, I think there needs to be a reckoning. This girl offers too much incense at the altar of theatres, town, and fun. She taxes the strings of

Pocket-Book until he almost breaks in two. I'll send for Exam, that mighty reckoner, to punish Everygirl.

(Enter Exam).

Exam: Dear Faculty, I am here at your command!

Faculty: Go to Everygirl and there spring unexpectedly upon her and make her wrestle with your perplexing questions.

(Faculty withdraws).

Exam: I will appear before Everygirl and make her bite her fingernails in desperation. I'll cause her to suffer remorse because she failed to visit Library. I'll threaten her with Low-Grades—that dreadful villain that causes many girls to have night-mares.

(Exam halts Everygirl).

Everygirl, take heed! Where are you going? I am sent from Faculty to you in order to make you realize how lazy and negligent you've been.

Everygirl: Oh! Exam, how you do frighten me. I had no idea I would meet you today. You come when I least expect you. I fully intended to prepare myself for this meeting but I spent a delightful afternoon with Theatre and just neglected you. Please come another day.

Exam: No! You must meet me today. I give no warning, it's true, when I come. Sometimes I slink like a cat and when you least expect me, I jump upon you, scratch you, and leave you with Low-Grade. Get your pen and paper, the weapons with which you fight me, and I'll return on the black-board presently.

(Exit Exam.)

Everygirl: Alas! how can I save myself in this combat with my enemy. Perhaps, my old friends, Pharmacy, Theatre, Tennis-Court and Swimming-

Pool can get me out of this difficulty. Many are the happy hours we spent together in pleasure and fun. Here comes Pharmacy now!

(Enter Pharm.).

Pharm: And why do you look so blue and depressed and why are tears trickling down your cheeks?

Evyg: Ah! dear friends, I am in great trouble. Exam is about to appear before me and I am not prepared to meet him. What can I do?

Pharm: Because you've spent so many happy hours with me, drinking limeades and munching candy, I've grown to know you well. You are too weak to stay away from me, and yet my influence over you has helped you none.

Evyg: But for the sake of our companionship, won't you help me run away and escape this monster?

Pharm: There is no escape from Exam in life—sooner or later you'll learn that. You may escape him in one form but it's impossible to evade all testing-times or reckonings in life. I'm sorry I cannot help you. But we pay for everything we get in life, you know, and now you must pay for knowing me so well. Farewell!

(Exit Pharmacy).

Evyg: Alack! Never did I think my friend, Pharm, would desert me. But then we never know our real friends until a testing time comes. And they who suffer with us, through trials and troubles, are indeed true friends, but the false ones fall along the wayside. Ah! where are my true friends?

(Enter Swimming-Pool and Tennis-Court).

S. Pool: Two true friends you see before you now.

T. Court: Many long afternoons have your nimble feet run over me and pray, how may I serve you now?

Evyg: Dear friends, we have spent much time together and so I'll tell you what my trouble is. I must meet Exam and I'm unable to conquer him in the

struggle and come out with a passing grade.

S. Pool: But how can we aid you in the struggle? 'Tis true that you have visited me often in the Gym and we were happy friends, but now you have no need of me.

(Exit Swimming Pool).

T. Court: Sometimes you'll learn that I am useful in developing your muscles but too much time spent with me will show up in your grades. Farewell!

(Exit T. Court).

Evyg: Here comes Theatre—that glittering, entertaining personage with whom I've spent many hours. He took me from a world of sordidness and pettiness and placed me in a world of make-believe. But—who is that lean and lanky person with Theatre? Ah—I recognize him now—it's Pocket-Book! Hello, Friends!

Theatre: Come with me, Everygirl, and I'll erase that frown from off your face; I'll turn your tears into laughter; I'll make you forget your cares.

Evyg: Ah! If you only would, but you see today is my reckoning day. Exam will soon be facing me with grim determination and I must overcome him.

Theatre: Nothing I could offer you will help you. I only afford amusement, laughter, music, and they won't pass you, will they? But perhaps Pocket-Book here might save you.

P. Book: If I could help you, I wouldn't. I'm so thin now I can hardly talk and you've made me that way. Everytime you went to town or visited Pharm, it made me leaner and now I hope you suffer and go down in defeat before Exam.

(Exit Theatre and P. Book).

Evyg: It's almost time for Exam to come now. There seems to be nothing I can do but face him. Sooner or later we all face great difficulties or meet obstacles and it is only through study and preparation that we can overcome these. If I were prepared, I would wel-

come Exam for he would give me a chance to show my knowledge and wisdom. But—who is this stranger approaching?

(Enter Library).

Library: Good-afternoon, Everygirl! What makes you stare so? You don't recognise me. But then why should you?

Evyg: Who are you, stranger?

Libr: I am Library! I am he whom you never visit. You pass me every day on your way to Pharm or town, but you never cast me a glance. To some girls I'm a terror, but that's because they don't know me well enough. To those that really know me, I open up new vistas of learning. I open up the door of wisdom and stand there on the threshold of a new and delightful life.

Evyg: I don't know why I've neglected knowing you. If ever I needed you, though, I surely need you now. I shall face Exam soon and since I haven't studied, I'm unable to meet him.

Libr: I was sent here just to help such girls as you. There is a friend living in my house, called knowledge and

after I've introduced you and you've become fast friends, I'm sure you'll be ready to conquer Exam. After all, Exam isn't such an ogre if we are accompanied by that friend, knowledge.

Evyg: Your generosity and kindness overwhelm me. How can I ever repay you? From now on I shall be your devoted slave. I shall stay near you every spare minute I have. I realize now that nothing ever comes to those who waste their time on petty diversions. Already I feel strong, and ready to meet Exam and conquer him, thanks to you, dear Library!

(Enter Messenger as Epilogue).

Messenger: The curtain closes on the scene;

The stage is dark and bare.
The characters whom you have seen
Are gone from off the stage.
We hope you have enjoyed
Our humble little play.
And just remember when you
Meet great obstacles in life,
Apply yourself to every problem
And you'll come out all right!

Fantasy

By ELIZABETH ANDERSON

Up and down. Five, six. Right, left. Smile, always smile no matter how tight that band around one's brains. Kick, eleven, twelve. Old form! Not quite so high that time. Perhaps Benny wouldn't notice, not with the premiere writhing in front of one. It didn't matter so much now. It used to be thrilling on the end—first to come in and last to go out and the boxes so near. The school-girl glamour of it! But now—the center of the stage had no attraction except for Miss Leconte—French did she say—hogging it all. Oh well, one couldn't have any kick coming when one was lucky not to have been thrown out. Decent of Mr. Solomon not to let Benny chuck her—only decent thing he ever did. How despicable and baffling not to be able to assert one's self, to shout out one's pride. Angels of Broadway they said. Ha. Angels in heaven. What was heaven even in those far-away days? Now there was no place where one could pray or even cry. Who wanted to cry about what—or to pray? Ridiculous. How funny, how tremendously funny, how screamingly funny. And the mamma skunk said—One must die if one can't laugh. Oh. Back left, whirl right—no. What was Benny saying—pulled that once too often. No good saying anything even to Mr. Solomon! As though she would stoop to that. Walking papers, what? Dancing papers, drawing papers at art school. No one to buy. Everyone selling. Oh death—

Milly went down the spiral staircase from the stage to the enormous dressing room hung with costumes like giant flowers.

Around and around like one's head after a game of "slinging stature". It was so very long since she'd been a little girl—mother's little girl playing on the terrace where the daffodils

marched up and up like soldiers with golden bonnets. Mother seemed so vague—kind eyes and soft hands or just a gentle sigh passing through the cool, big living-room. Well, anyway, she wouldn't know about Milly's being thrown out of the chorus. She wouldn't have understood anyone's not wanting Milly, her little girl. She wouldn't have understood Milly's being poor. Mother hated poverty. She couldn't have known that the income wouldn't last to send Milly through art school. She wouldn't have understood why nobody wanted Milly's little sketches; why Milly wasn't besieged with suitors—of the eligible sort; why Milly had to slave and skimp and rush to live. But what was living, anyway. Mother would have sighed and smilingly said that her little girl was being foolish.

Where were those stockings she had taken off such a short while ago. Rehearsal would be over before she was dressed. She couldn't bear seeing any of those girls again. Up and down. See-saw Magery Daw. She hated Jenny. Why couldn't she do her work faster? See-saw. She couldn't think, she couldn't swallow. Her throat and lips burned. Water! She always used to swim when things were unbearable. Just to swim down the river—on and on to eternity. Decided. The tram wasn't far and she could walk to the river—perhaps one of those private places.

There was the bathing suit and the two practice rompers. Oh, leave them for somebody else. She would never again wait in the reception room of a booking agencq. It was no use. All out!

What next? The tram, of course.

The river looked just as it did when mother's friends had sometimes brought her here during that first year at art

school. The grass and the trees on the hill slopes were green, and the sunlight was still gold, for it was early. Later it would be white heat. The breeze was fresh and green, blowing against one like an evaporated ocean, roll on roll.

The artificial beach was deserted. Mechanically Milly changed to her suit. Dressing-rooms made one forget that anybody might notice.

Funny how black water could be near the bank. It was so calm, so silent, one could slip down and down to the very depths, not having to think, not caring, then peace.

The water was deep and cold. Milly sank under closing her eyes and forcing her mind to go blank. With a shock she came to the surface sputtering and struggling.

A swimmer could never let himself drown. A swimmer could never drown himself. But God wouldn't take this peace away from her. Peace —. Surely that couldn't be a human voice. Too late to duck under. That creature with the flapping skirts was running right toward her. Who was Master Danny? Why had she let him swim out beyond reach. That white speck couldn't be human. It was too far away for anyone to find out. It would be like fireflies—not where you saw the light, but gone when you reached out ever so quickly. If only one's hair wouldn't get in one's eyes or water in one's mouth and nose, one might get near enough to see what the white splotch was. It bobbed like a tiny piece of sodium in a little crucible, but instead of getting smaller, it seemed much longer. Little

waves were so hateful about slapping themselves into one's face. Arms seemed tired so quickly. They were of no more use than windmills. The swimming teacher during that whole year at college, didn't say what to do with arms like the wings of a windmill. But wings. One day one would spread out the folded wings, silvery, fragile, and delicate. One could breathe on the heights and could stand on a star. The sky and the sea were so different. Water suffocated and choked one.

To have pulled past it, that white face! Now everything was so clear for a moment. Hand under chin and arm locked in arm. Marian had said that Mr. Williams was unconscious when she brought him in at the seashore. Marian was right. Marian was brave, for she had made her strength hold out. Poor little Danny could have counted on Marian. Once there had been a teddy-bear named Danny, but the little girl at Sunday School had one whose eyes lighted up. Kind eyes, mother's eyes. They were sweet with a light in them, too, when she smiled. How could one's eyes burn so fearfully, as though one had cried all night. Night and blackness. How was it dark so soon? Pulling and struggling and gulping river water lasted a whole day. One could be too tired to shake the hair out of one's mouth and eyes. Danny would have to go on alone. The little bear whose eyes didn't light up. Whose foot and side were being torn by the roughness of the sand? It was so dark that one couldn't see Danny, not even feel him. But blackness was rest and oblivion. There were no stars, but peace.

The Character of Robert Browning

By MARTHA McCOWEN

Robert Browning seems to me one of the most misunderstood figures in English literature. For myself, I can truthfully say that my idea of the man before studying his life was as far from the truth as is most of the gossip one hears. And I think that my former conception of Browning's character and personality is typical of the army of American college girls. One might even take a course in Browning and come out of it with the same erroneous impression of the man himself, if his poetry alone were perused in the course. I have always greatly admired his works and abhorred the man and his life. I could think of what I knew of his love-story with nothing save repulsion. To elope with an invalid, ugly, unattractive, and years his senior? Ugh! I could find no romance here. The rest of his life I took for granted was as boring as the encyclopedia account makes it. In contrast to the panorama of vivid personalities who flashed across the silver screen of the Romantic period—Shelley, Keats, Byron—Browning appeared to me prosaic and dull, even in the sound of his name.

As I have already said, Browning's work has always appealed to me. I dissociated it completely from the man, for I could not understand how such stirring poetry could have fallen from the pen of a man whose life was pathetically uneventful—how such beautiful love poems could have been written by a man whose life lacked a real romance—how his dramatic monologues could have been produced by a brain whose owner possessed no imagination. (So I thought).

Obviously, I chose Browning as my subject with the end in view of writing a paper on his poetry, with as little about the poet as possible. And then the revelation came, Browning and his Ba

stood revealed on the screen as they really were—looking down rather accusingly at humble me, an audience of one. With frantic haste I clutched for pencil and paper, and set out to vindicate the Brownings—to myself and by myself. And that is why I am attempting to paint one picture of a man, instead of an art gallery full of poems. I want to do a portrait of Browning as delightful as his personality has become to me—to show that his love life is ten times as full of romance as Byron's; and to prove that his life was anything but dully uneventful. For no existence could have been prosaic when colored with the roseate glow of a powerful, active personality. It is only when one reads of Browning in a brief biographical sketch that such an opinion could be formed. No exiles? No series of mistresses? No tragic, violent death? "Bah," says the reader, and Browning is stuck off in his mind along with all the other boring figures in literature that he certainly was not.

Browning was a veritable child all his life. Such a statement about the author of "Sordelle" seems strange, but it is true. The five year old boy who waited eagerly for his father to come home from work so that they could enact the story of the Iliad together is plainly visible in the twenty-three year old youth who wrote plays for William Macready and in the mature man who delighted in being called the greatest diner-out in England. His formal education was complete at the age of fourteen, after he had spent four years as a day student at the Rev. Thomas Read's school in the neighborhood of his home. By this time his father's friends were beginning to take an interest in the boy, and these friends were men from whom such notice meant much. John Stuart

Mill dignified to glance over some verses, and the old economist's praises were more lavish than mere politeness dictated. But he added the comment:

"The writer possesses a deeper self-consciousness than I ever knew in a sane human being."

This criticism, of course, merely meant that Browning had reached adolescence. He became a vegetarian, and upon discovering Shelley all by himself, in honor of this gentleman, he became an Atheist. He soon recovered from these ailments of youth, however, especially from the first, which made him slightly ill. He developed a bumptious manner and a loud voice. He displayed with an annoying certainty his unusual learning, and in a lordly way he settled questions of politics and philosophy which were ushering in the glories of the Victorian age. At last even his patient mother remonstrated, and the hitherto admiring younger sister fled at his approach. In short, he was eighteen.

The young man Browning made a striking appearance. Someone called him the "first poet since Byron who really looks like a poet." At a dinner given by Sergeant Talfourd he was placed before the public eye in a most flattering way. A toast was offered "To the Poets of England." Men glanced expectantly to where Wordsworth smiled his placid, faintly ironic smile beside Walter Savage Lander. It was a delicate moment for the host, but Talfourd possessed the tact which entertainers of writing men must acquire to meet just such situations. He bowed to his two most distinguished guests, but turned toward "Robert Browning, the youngest of the poets of England." The novice, flushing with pride and pleasure, responded gracefully and briefly to the toast. Macready, the actor, across the table listened to the handsome youth speak intelligently of the stage. "Write me a play, Browning, and keep me from going to America," he called. Thus, over the wine, Robert Browning, play-

wright, was born. With great enthusiasm he launched upon the career which earned for him a reputation that his admirers are still trying to explain away.

"Paracelsus" was a turning point in the poet's life. It was published with his father's money when Browning was not quite twenty-four. It placed him forever among the poets whom writers read, and it did more than that—it won for him the friendship of men who were building a new Golden Age of English letters, and it opened for him the doors of a glittering Society which aspired to a patronage of the arts.

Now we have before us the Robert Browning who took London by storm. He was no longer in the making, yet he was so young, to have written a book before whose learning a superficial public shrank. His big gray eyes looked out under a high, wide brow, and a mop of glossy, nearly black hair fell from it in waves of Byronic splendor; well-shaped, sensitive lips curved in a smile of happiness upon all men, and even the sourest men usually smiled back. There was no doubt about his good looks, and no one disputed his charm. Invitations were repeated, and in the social world of England, Browning shone. He could talk charmingly, he could make music and sketch an amusing caricature, and he could hold his own on the dance floor with any man in London. And it was really much better to have the respect of the charming people he met at dinners than the praise of his literary peers. All the while the young poet was acquiring the charm, tolerance, and ease of manner that were to make him the most delightful dinner guest in London, even to those who were inexpressibly bored by his books.

Stage fever had burned in Browning's brain since he was five years old. The glamour of the theatre appealed to his nature, and even after "Strafford," his first attempt, ran only five nights, he believed that the stage was the tool for ennobling a public that refused to buy

books but might come to a theatre. After all, poetry was made to be heard, not read. He wrote two plays which Macready turned down, and then he produced "Blot on the 'Scrutcheon" which ran three rights in 1843 with only the gallery reasonably filled. For more reasons than one, it was too bad Browning ever tried to be a playwright. He lost a friend by it, for he and Macready could never forgive each other the failure; and on the whole it was an exhausting time. Browning needed rest, and he went off to Italy to find it. On his return he discovered that Elizabeth Barrett had published a new book. He rejoiced as he read his name bracketed in "Lady Geraldine's Courtship" with the great of literature. Just as a small child is lifted to the clouds by the approval of an elder, so Browning's heart beat happily at the slightest words of praise.

Then came the writing of a note which was to change Browning's whole life. It was an enthusiastic expression of gratitude and delight in her verses to Elizabeth Barrett. It ended, "I love your works, my dear Miss Barrett, and I love you, too." He really meant this, and he evidently did not overdo it. She was nearly forty, she had been an invalid since thrown from her horse at sixteen, but she reacted like a school girl to the ardor of her new correspondent. She replied by praising "Dear Mr. Browning" far more than he deserved and asked gracefully for criticism of her work.

At once they were off on a flying start. Robert took on the task of mentor, and protested loudly that her works were perfect.

Before long they became "Ba" and "Robert" to each other. For weeks and weeks it was "Dear Friend"; before much longer "Dearest Friend"; and suddenly, the "Friend" disappeared altogether. But even such slow progress was remarkable, considering that the lovers had never met. With character-

istic obscurity, he managed to convey his meaning to a heart that went more than half way to meet his. Easily stirred by a poet's phrases, Ba did not hesitate to lead the young man on, so they became very busy getting acquainted. She wanted to know all about him. He told her of his friends and his family, his childhood and his hobbies. He enlarged on his headaches—they usually came after he had been dancing all night—but Ba extended anguished sympathy. Of her own very real sufferings she said nothing. She told him of her friends and a little of her life. Both wrote eagerly of the day in spring when Ba's health might enable them to meet.

Even in this embryonic stage of their courtship, the shadow of Ba's father fell ominously across their happiness. Somewhat of a tyrant, the elder Barrett brought up his children with a sternness so erratic as to verge on madness. He was especially strict with Ba, of whose talents he was duly proud. He regarded her illness as a natural state, and thought it queer if she felt well. Consequently, the only London she ever knew was the gloomy house on Wimpole Street, which she termed "a Newgate turned inside out."

As the months rolled by, the impatient Robert waited with eager confidence for the great day when he could really visit the house in Wimpole Street. With increasing nervousness Ba wrote to Robert, saying:

"There is nothing to see in me nor to hear in me. If my poetry is worth anything in any eye, it is the flower of me—the rest of me is nothing but a root fit for the ground and darkness."

So it was with great apprehension that Ba sent the message in May that re-deemed her promise. "Come Tuesday at three," she wrote at last.

At this first meeting, Robert found a Paradise which only his eyes could discern. Led up dark, gloomy steps by Ba's sister to a dark, gloomy room with heavy furniture, he found on the sofa a slight,

plainly dressed figure, with dark curls on either side of a pale face, bright brown eyes, a rather long nose, and a large mouth. Her dark skirt hung in voluminous folds above many petticoats and completely concealed her feet. She was horribly nervous, but the humor of the situation made the corners of her mouth twist upwards just a little. It was a spirit which Robert could admire boundlessly, and both his good judgment and his sentimentality were captivated by Ba's unquenchable sense of the ridiculous. He had come expecting to find perfection, and he was always finding what he looked for.

With characteristic promptness, Robert rushed head long to a proposal of marriage. He would not be put aside for any of the many obvious reasons why marriage to Ba seemed impossible. To Browning, anything was possible where the will predominated, and not to follow the dictates of one's heart was to him an unforgivable crime against the will. He preached this idea in his poetry, and he practiced it in his life. His letters pleaded earnestly between weekly visits, and when Ba continually refused, he wrote with unrestrained devotion:

"I would come when you let me, and go when you bade me—I would be no more than one of your brothers."

The day was won, for Ba replied by return post, "I am yours for everything but to do you harm."

Then their plans began to be more definite. Ba first wanted to gain a little strength, so she proposed a quiet, happy winter of talk and letters, and Robert was obliged to bow to her decision. Thus the winter passed, and the end of August found Robert pressing for an elopement within a month. Ba agreed, and Robert ran madly about the town seeking information concerning boats, and asking his friends what they knew about roads and inns in Italy. On her wedding day, Ba, after a sleepless night, staggered out on her maid's arm, and in a brief half hour the ceremony at the

church was all over, and the bride drove off leaving the happy bridegroom making a note in his diary that this had been their ninety-first meeting! At the end of the week, Ba walked away from the dark recesses of her home to the haven of Robert's love. This time she did not totter, scorning her maid's aid. No one seeing her would have suspected that here went England's leading poetess to meet her lover. Browning preserved the spirit of his courtship to the end. Even in love he never quite lost the ability to express his thoughts.

Robert proved to be the most perfect of husbands. Never once was Ba to regret having placed her fate in his hands. Even years after their marriage he refused to go to dinner-parties which would have been too strenuous for her. In the first few years they never went out at all, and Browning, the great diner-out, the dancer, the convivial soul of a thousand parties remained happily by his own fireside, roasting chestnuts, reading, talking, or playing the piano. He had always known what he wanted, so he was not surprised to find that this new mode of life was much more fun than the gayest of London seasons. Fanny Kemble, the actress, was a frequent visitor to the Brownings, and she remarked of her host that he was the only man she ever knew who behaved like a Christian to his wife!

Their fifteen years together were so perfect as to seem unreal to the reader. Browning was the giver and receiver of a love that never faltered, and when the Italian idyll ended with Ba's death in his arms, he was far more fortunate in his memories than most men are in their daily experiences. Thus ended a love story in which not even an Erskine could find a flaw, or a single loophole to warrant a cynical account of its perfection. It was too pure in its simplicity for anyone to think of it with anything but reverence.

Browning was a confirmed optimist, and when he lost his grip on his creed, he

fell to the most profound depths of misery any man can know. He felt himself as existing only in the form of a wild and futile cry of longing for a happiness that was gone. For several weeks he argued with himself about the future. By the time he was rested and his nerves quieted a little, the old optimism was returning, and he realized that he was only forty-nine, and that the world had employment for him.

Two years later, in the spring of 1862, a new lion was on exhibition at the most elegant of London houses. He had gone away a young man of promise, and now he had come back with the promise more than fulfilled. He had not remembered how pleasant for a bachelor the formality and etiquette of England's better homes could be. He soon recovered old habits of thought, for optimism is a weed not easily destroyed, and he stepped easily into a comfortable place among the writing men who were setting marks for the future.

The fame Browning won in the seventies was harvested by rich rewards in the eighties. The older he grew, the more he enjoyed life, yet he was still a child. At seventy he could not adjust himself to the idea of being a great man, just as at eighteen he failed to realize that he was not a great man. Some one once asked him if he objected to all the adulation.

"Object to it!" he cried, "No, I have waited forty years for it, and now—I like it." His robust health accounted for this ability to enjoy a life that other men, no less vain, found exhausting. To the end of his life, he was capable of a powerful energy envied by younger men.

Lover of life though he was, Browning did not make a fuss about dying. He could look back on seventy-seven wonderful years, and his last words were:

"How gratifying." He murmured this when a telegram came saying that the first edition of *Asolando* was nearly sold out. After many years of early neglect,

the reviews were favorable. After the middle years of recognition without book sales, the edition was nearly exhausted! Thus, with a pleasing thought in his mind, Robert Browning died. It seems a shame that all the honors in which he had rejoiced in the last years of his life were eclipsed by those paid him at his death, and yet he knew nothing of it. This child-man would have gloried in it so.

The obscurity of Browning—how often have we heard the phrase! That he was purposely abstruse is one of the biggest injustices his accusers do him. He simply never fully realized the magnitude of the world's ignorance, and the world never forgave him. He took it for granted that other men had the same training he had received from his voluminous reading, and therefore he started far beyond the ordinary man's comprehension. In *Sordello*, the poem which first dazed the English public, he started with an assumption of the reader's omniscience and then went on in leaps from one idea to another. He never attained such heights, or rather depths of obscurity as in this poem.

Browning himself grew puzzled to remember what his meaning was, and years later he was obliged to admit that:

"When that poem was written, two knew what it meant—God and Robert Browning. Now God alone knows!"

Tennyson said that he understood only the first and last lines, and both of them were lies. They were:

I. "Who will, may hear *Sordello*'s story told."

II. "Who would has heard *Sordello*'s story told."

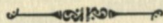
Although he never became so incomprehensible again, his reputation was made forever. Ever since, people have had a passion for interpreting Browning, even when he merely says:

"God's in His heaven,
All's right with the world!"

His admirers have made another mis-

take—that of fixing it in everyone's minds that Browning was a philosopher and not a poet. They have talked so much about his philosophy that one almost forgets he was primarily a poet—and human, like the rest of us. His in-

tense interest in human nature was expressed by his delight in watching faces in the street, and he tried to explain in his poetry the motives and reasons back of the actions of his characters. But he wrote poetry, not philosophical or psychological researches.



Spring

By MARION BROWN

Three things
Spring meant to me:
Pink honeysuckle,
 Crowding moist banks
 And leaning over, dropping
 Pink fairy boats
 Into the stream below,
Wild violets,
 Swaying on slender stems
 To dust the grass
 With faint perfume,
And that twin-hearted soul
Who led me to this spot.

His joy lay in the beholding,
His eyes drank in this beauty:
The stream,
 Coming round
 The pink bordered bend,
 Quarrelling gleefully
 With the stumpy log
 New fallen in its path,
 Throwing its little fairy boats
 Against the wrinkled bark
 Or dashing them around the end
 In playful scorn,
The blossoms,
 Massed together
 Seeking sweet drink
 For their clustered cups of pink,
The purple violets,
 Playing hide and seek
 About his friendly feet.

Yes—these three things
Spring meant to me
But now Spring means
One thing:
A plot of earth, newly turned,
Beside the rolling river,
A quiet spot that holds
His silvered head.
And there I go,
Arms and heart
Choked
With sweet honeysuckle
And wild violets.

"According to Dame Fashion"

By BETTY HUNT

I started out with the full intention of writing an exhaustive essay on the development of dress, but was fairly snowed under by the wealth of material which presented itself. I was at a loss to decide whether to write on the effect history had on costume or the effect costume had on history, and at last I ended by writing on neither. Some of the odd facts I ran across during the hours I spent in research struck my fancy, however, so I decided to leave exhaustive essays to others more capable to write them than I am, and to hit the question of dress in the high and interesting spots only.

The first form of clothing that I could find any record of was described in the third chapter of Genesis. This was Eve's rather well-known dress of fig leaves. After much thought and study I finally came to the conclusion that there are two reasons why her costume did not retain its vogue. First, it was purely a dress for warm weather, since there are no fig leaves in the winter. If we had continued to use vegetation in a raw form to clad ourselves with, we should be forced to utilize evergreens such as pine needles in the winter; and that, to say the least, would be a trifle uncomfortable. In the second place, the activity of present day woman is rather too strenuous for the stability of a leafy costume. It is hard to picture Jane playing tennis in a sport suit of weeping-willow, or to picture Mary swimming in a suit of dogwood leaves trimmed in flowers of the same tree. So the ingenuity of Eve's gown became a thing of the past.

I next decided to take a glimpse at Egypt, land of Cleopatra. Now I had always fondly pictured this heroine in a barge reclining on a silken sofa and

lazily floating down the Nile with Antony. Her costume I had always imagined as being particularly striking because of its lack. Judge my surprise, then, when I learned that the women in Egypt wore tunic dresses that would be more than respectable today. Instead of having beautiful long tresses falling gracefully about her shoulders, I discovered that Cleopatra either wore her hair in hundreds of corkscrew curls or else had her hair completely shaved. There was also a custom among the people of the Nile to deform the heads of their women by continual pressing, and for fear I would complete the disillusion by landing on the information that the famous Cleo had a deformed head, I quickly left the distasteful subject.

From such unpleasantness I took a running jump and landed in the midst of the Middle Ages, at the time when Guinevere and Elaine were holding sway. Here among women of such renowned purity, I felt sure I would find refreshing facts. The dresses were not so bad, either. Mostly made on princess lines, they conformed to the body and were not entirely different from the dresses that will be in vogue ten years from now (that is, if fashion continues along the lines in which it is travelling). In other words, the gowns of the Middle Ages were exaggerations of those we are wearing today. But oh the hats! I have never seen such terrors. For the life of me, I could not feature the gentle Elaine wearing one of the so-called two-horned head-dresses. These hats stuck up in two points which must have given a mephistophelian air to anyone who wore them. Nor could I imagine Guinevere appearing in a great hennin which looked like a fool's cap with a train on it. It is really no wonder after seeing such sights as these hats that the people

of the Middle Ages believed in evil spirits.

Next I slid into the French renaissance court to take a slant at the styles. The general make-up of the dresses was composed of a tight basque waist, a very full skirt, and puffy puffed sleeves. The ruff had been introduced from Italy by Catherine de Medici, who was the wife of Henry II. The greatest difficulty to surmount when wearing such a ruff was eating soup gracefully and without soiling the carefully starched neck-piece. Queen Catherine overcame this by using soup spoons which had handles about fourteen inches long. The inconvenience of ruffs was nothing, however, compared to the inconvenience that the lovely French women must have had in keeping their slender waists, the measurement of which hardly exceeded the length of their soup spoons. Catherine herself wore a bodice of steel under her dress. It was hideous to think of such torture for the sake of mere beauty, so I bade farewell to Queen Catherine and hopped over to early America for a little visit.

Here I found full skirts reinforced with crinoline petticoats—the richer the family was, the more petticoats the girl had. But mere crinoline framework did not satisfy such women as “Glorious Betsy Patterson”, and in pursuit of the “balloon” fad, they soon adopted the hoop skirt. It seems the feminine element of the early Americas thought that by broadening the skirts, the waist would appear smaller. And even after the hoop skirt had lost its popularity proof of this idea was given by the familiar bustle. Hats sat directly on top of the head and were decorated with a profusion of feathers, flowers, and frills; bows tied under the chin; and curls rippled over the shoulders. Parasols which were too small to do any possible good, were quite the rage, and many other trifles helped to make this age the most picturesque which I had yet returned to. It was with a backward

glance of regret that I left the 40's to visit the 90's.

The dashing 90's were such a violent change from the demure 40's that I was quite startled. No longer did the women carry fluffy parasols, wear long curls and languish; no longer did they rustle about in silken skirts whose lower edge measured nearly three yards in circumference. Instead the tullness went to the arms and huge leg of mutton sleeves made their entrance into elite society. Wide shoulders became the vogue. But women also began to enter sporting activities, and adopted what they called simple frocks, but what we might have another description for, because these dresses were made of stiff, starched linen and were worn over four or five petticoats. The Gibson Girl was the ideal of the age, and she was even pictured sometimes in a bathing suit. But these were still a trifle daring, and only the most courageous were brave enough to face the staring public in suits which came almost to their knees—even though they did wear black stockings and high-top shoes.

Well, it was only a short jump back to our own day, and I soon found myself again in the age of evening dresses which sweep the floor and bathing suits which have no backs. Once more I found myself among dainty long-haired girls who look like the essence of Miss 1840 one moment, and who can become the heart and center of a fast moving basketball or soccer game the next. The modern girl at first glance seems to be a study in contradictions, but on closer inspection she proves to be a mixture of all the qualities of other ages with a dash of spice and pep all her own. She is a sort of epicurean who has extracted the fine and beautiful from the past and added her own finishing touch to it. So after one hasty glance back over the ages of Eve, Cleopatra, Elaine, Catherine de Medici, Betsy Patterson, and the Gibson Girl, I turned back again to my own age without a single sigh of regret.

The Bluff

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

By LILLIAN IVEY PAFFORD

CAST OF CHARACTERS

MR. STONE: Wealthy man, whose hobby is race horses.

MEDA STONE: Beautiful, but willful daughter.

CHARLES: Chauffeur for the Stones.

BOB AND GEORGE: Grooms for Mr. Stone's best horses.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I. Stable yard. An afternoon in June.

ACT II. A bungalow kitchen. A week later.

ACT III. Same as Act II. The next morning.

ACT I.

(Curtain rises on scene back of stables where two grooms are sitting on a stack of hay, looking most dejected.)

BOB—One of these days she'll get it, I tell you, and when she does we'll get our walking papers.

GEORGE—What did you let her take Prince out for? You could have told her he had a lame leg, or a cold—or—aw, anything to have stopped her. Why didn't you say the boss had said for us not to let any of the guests ride that fool Prince?

BOB—Well, to begin with, he didn't tell me—he told you—and to end with Miss Meda is his daughter, and not one of the guests.

GEORGE—You know he would have included her name if he'd thought she had been wild enough to want Prince. That girl's gonna kill herself yet.

BOB—Not her! If she hadn't a charmed life, she'd uv been killed when



she drove her roadster off the embankment last week. That boat looked like it had tried to do a pan-cake act—and what happened to her? Nuthin'! Slung out—and not a scratch. If it'd been me—I'd been helping Gabriel now.

GEORGE — Maybe! But, anyway, she's the one to worry about now!

BOB—I ain't worrying none about her—I'm plumb terrified about

that horse—and my job! (Starts to leave L. E. as Meda come on stage R. E. Meda enters in riding habit, disheveled and limping.)

MEDA—Wait a minute, Bob. (Bob turns, sees her in disarray, and leans against hay.)

BOB—Oh, Lawdy!!! (Fans himself.) (George runs to Meda.)

GEORGE—What happened, Miss Meda? Are you hurt?

BOB—Where's Prince? (George gives him a look of scorn.)

MEDA—Bob, you were right about my taking Prince out. I'm sorry I didn't listen to your warnings. I couldn't believe he could be as dangerous as you said—and he was so beautiful.

BOB—Was! (Looks scared as Mr. Stone walks up behind Meda.)

MEDA—Well, it isn't in the past tense yet, but I'm afraid it will be soon. He ran away with me; failed to clear the blind hurdle in the South field and broke his leg. I think his hip is crushed too; he couldn't rise. Perhaps you should take a pistol along when you go

out to see about him. (George and Bob exit.)

MR. STONE—So! With your hard-headiness you have ruined the pride of my stable. You knew to stay off Prince. He was perfect on the track, but you knew your cross-country ride would ruin him! Eight thousand dollars thrown in the ditch to satisfy your foolish whims. Besides the purse!! Of all the confounded—

MEDA—But father—

MR. STONE—Don't but anything. There's nothing for you to say—you—chip. (Words fail him and he leaves by L. E.)

MEDA—(Looking after him.) I guess chip is right. Chip off the old block—but I'm **not** going to let money rule me like that. It's always money, money, money. Didn't even ask if I was hurt. I hate money. I've got to get away from it—marry the first eligible poor man I can find.

(Charles enters from R. E.)

CHARLES—I beg your pardon—! You see I overheard your—er—statement concerning the—poor man, and wanted to get in an early application. I believe I can qualify, since I only have a week's wages in my pocket—not even a bank account. I'm poor enough to be eligible—still not in danger of starvation.

MEDA—I didn't mean—

CHARLES — (Laughing.) Didn't mean to have your bluff called?

MEDA—Bluff? I'll call **your** bluff. Let's go!

CHARLES—Let's go.

MEDA—Surely—to the City Hall.

CHARLES—(Throwing hat high in the air. Bluff nothing! Oh, boy, this is my lucky day. (Takes Meda by hand and runs off R. E.)

(Curtain.)

ACT II.

A week later. Kitchen of bungalow.

(Meda is washing dishes, slopping water out of pan, messing up dress, etc. Breaks a dish—runs to stove, takes out

burned bread. Kicks over chair, sits on floor and cries.)

(Charles enters, stands looking at Meda for a moment, starts to pick her up, changes mind and steps back.)

CHARLES—So money wasn't so bad after all, was it?

MEDA—(From floor.) You brute—standing up there laughing at me. You're **hateful**. It isn't funny to me when I can't keep the water in the dishpan—and the dishes are so slick I can't hold them, and the stove cooks too fast, or not at all. (Gets up.) I do try—but you **laugh** at me and don't even **try** to help. You know you don't. You wouldn't eat the biscuit yesterday because you said they were too hard. You wouldn't even wear the pajamas I washed and ironed for you, you said they had so much starch in them they felt like a suit of armor.

CHARLIE—Meda, you're all upset and hysterical. I thought you wanted a taste of poverty. Of course you don't have to wear yourself out. We can afford a girl to help you around the house.

MEDA—You let me work like a dog all this week and when you could afford help! And you thought I **liked** it. Well, listen here young man, you have a **most** extreme sense of humor—and I'd just **die** laughing to see **you** do the work I've been doing. (Charles takes off coat, rolls up sleeves and starts finishing the dishes.)

CHARLES—I would have helped you all the time, but you scorned all suggestions.

MEDA—(Drying dishes.) I'm not going to let you be a better sport than I am—I'll help clean up this mess I've made, and then I'm going to blow a fond farewell kiss to the whole place, and you won't call my bluff **this** time.

CHARLES—Don't say anything until you get out of this rash mood—then, we'll talk things over and see what can be done. I was afraid you'd be all in tonight so I came by the Delicatessen

shop and got some knick-knacks for a picnic supper.

MEDA—(Brightening.) Really! Oh, it will be great to have some decent food again. (She sets the table while Charles steps out to get the package of food.)

CHARLES—Here you are! (They put things on table, talking about each thing as it is taken out.)

MEDA—Potato salad! It must take a whole day to prepare salad. I don't believe I can enjoy it. And anchovies—How did you know I liked them?

CHARLES—It can't be blamed on a man's intuition. I just overheard you say to your escort on the night I took you to the Greene Inn, that you wanted anchovies, and he could finish out the dinner.

MEDA—I had forgotten that I was—er—chaperoned.

CHARLES—(Grinning.) Oh, that's all right. I was quite proud and flattered to have the privilege of chauffeuring such an altogether lovely young lady. (Mockingly kisses her hand.)

MEDA—I wish you wouldn't always know just the right thing to say at just the right time—and,—I wish you weren't quite so good-looking so I could hate you better. Hating should be simple—not so complicated.

CHARLES—(Making a wry face.) We're going to get personal now—and ruin our supper. Come on, forget everything except that you are half-starved from your own cooking, (and so am I)—I mean lack of cooking. Maybe after you are well-fed, you'll forget you are leaving me tomorrow.

MEDA—Not on your life. There are two things I am certain of. One is, that I'm going to eat now—even if I do hate you, and the other is—that I'm leaving tomorrow.

(They start eating, eyeing each other uncertainly, as curtain falls.)

ACT III.

Same as Act II. Early the next morning.

(Meda comes in, puts coffee on, slices loaf of bread, straightens kitchen.)

MEDA—(Talking softly to herself.) Now! (Looks around.) Somehow I sorta hate to leave this little old place. It's been fun to try to do the things I should have known how to do all the time. Even if I did get a few burns. (Looks ruefully at hands.) And Charles—! I'm awfully fond of him. Maybe I'm in love with him—. Oh, bosh, here I am getting sentimental when I'd better be getting ready to leave. (Exit L. E.)

(Charles comes in R. E. with several framed sheep skins under his arm. Studies walls a minute, hangs and arranges certificates, diplomas, etc. Takes letter out of his pocket, opens it and props it on table facing Meda's room.)

CHARLES—It was good of the old boy to come across just when I needed him most. There's a chance that things can be fixed up with Mrs. Charles Breene. (Strokes chin.) Mrs. Charles Breen!! Hot dog!

MEDA—(Coming in.) Were you calling me? If you were—(sees frames, looks at Charles, then examines each one, comes back to table.) Charlie, I can't understand—

CHARLIE—Here. The pater can explain it in a missive he sent me yesterday. (Hands letter to Meda.) You see I got kicked out of Columbia for—a trifle, and the old man just emphasized the kick—and told me to swim—or sink. I didn't see where swimming could help much, but I tried cashing in on driving, and it turned out better returns than I had ever dreamed of. He heard through your father, with whom he was in school, that we had eloped—and here are his blessings—forgiveness—check for a honeymoon — n'everything. (Picks Meda up.) How 'bout it, honey? Ready?

MEDA—And how Your dad must be as marvelous as you are, especially—at calling "bluffs."

(End.)

Slender Fingers

By IDA YOUNG

IT was her hands that had first attracted his attention to her. Somehow they were almost transparent with the whiteness of the skin and the faint tracery of blue that suggested the rich young blood that raced through her veins. They had been total strangers until that most unforgettable afternoon when he had gone to her house to tea with his aunt. There it was that her long slender fingers had seemed to weave themselves into his dreams as they lingered caressingly among the gay red dragons that coiled around the fragile cups. Dragons. Suggestive too, but he couldn't let his mind wander away like that. Startled he came back to the question they had been discussing with an abruptness that almost upset her perfect composure.

"There is no use to even think of that Reitta", he said. And somehow the very name which had always seemed so musical and soft sounded harsh and bitter now.

"I had thought that you would try to see my point of view in this thing—mine and Larry's—but I see now that I might have known better than that. Larry has his life to live, and I intend to see that he gets a fair start; that he is not started off under the stigma of a father who has been untrue to the only woman who has ever entered his life. As for me, I could go where I am not known and begin life over under—I started to say a new name, but I have never had reason to be ashamed of the one I have and I do not intend to give myself cause at this late date. For Larry, it is positively impossible and unthinkable."



"I had an idea that you would prove unmanageable at first, Dan; so I had already decided to give you a few days to think things over. Perhaps it does sound a bit melodramatic, but since you know me at least

fairly well and since you know that I never make rash promises, I can but say that if you persist in refusing, you will be the one to suffer, and not only you, but Larry as well", she said in that low throaty voice that he had once found so appealing.

And her eyes were even more like the hard green balls of fire that distinguishes a cat in the dark. Her nose, no longer dainty and patrician, served now only to add to the general hard air of her face, and her hair fairly flaunted its dyed, artificial gold in his face.

"Your threats leave me even more cold than your pleadings, Reitta, and I in my turn, warn you that I shall fight you to the last minute and the last penny that I have or can get. I married you under false pretense; I won't even say that you tricked me, for I it is who tricked myself. I loved that artificial self that was all that I knew of you for a while. After Larry's advent, I will admit frankly that I fairly worshipped you, and I have been madly happy until the coming of that accursed legacy. It seemed to set you mad—money mad—and now I am at the end of my rope. I have done everything in my power to make you see things, and I have tried honestly to reason with you sensibly. Now I give up. I have agreed to settling—the greater part of the money on you, but when it comes to letting you tell the

world at large that I am the cause of the parting, I flatly refuse. At present, you are imposing on my hospitality, and I shall have to ask that you leave this house as soon as possible. Larry and I wish to continue our lives in peace, please go at once," he spoke without raising his voice, but something in the tone made her realize that further argument would gain nothing for her.

As she reached the door, she turned and saw him standing at the window, hands clenched tightly at his sides and his back to her. His dark hair with the wave right across the side of his head stood up in the back. How often she had brushed that identical kick-up out of Larry's hair. It was not of that she was thinking though now; it was only of some outstanding way to hurt him. Suddenly it came to her. Take Larry with her. That would make him give in where nothing else would, and surely Larry was as much hers as his. Swiftly she shut the door and slipped like a grim black shadow down the hall to the nursery. She had never been anything but a devoted mother to Larry, and he readily left with her. It was a matter of speed to get out of the house and into the car before they could miss Larry—or perhaps it was only luck. Ah well, she had

always been accused of having gambler's luck.

Down in the hall a door slammed—Dan had been waiting for that all unconsciously—and flying footsteps (they had a strangely familiar clatter even now) down the steps and onto the walk. Still Dan stood as though unable to move. Somehow the very air still carried the faint odor of jessamine. Somehow she seemed strangely still there back of him. Then suddenly the maddening sound of grinding brakes and a woman's agonized scream. He reached her first—crushed and still like a bruised flower, and those long slender fingers—forever he would hate the very sight of them—were curled over the trusting hand of Larry—a Larry too white and all too still.

They told him that she might have saved herself, but that when she saw the wheel strike Larry, she had deliberately flung herself beside him. Somehow even that did not help the grief in his heart. She had taken her threat into action, and she had fulfilled it far better than she could have dreamed, but somehow he could never picture those slender fingers as forever stilled; and somehow it helped to let them rest eternally, curved around the trusting hand of a wee, little lad.

S'Funny World

By IDA WOODWARD

O me! O my! What to do! What to do! when a feature is demanded of you. Subject?—my mind is a blank.

Cursing my fate, thus, of having to write an article when I had no ideas to begin on, I wandered aimlessly down the hall. At the end of a long corridor I came upon a classmate leaning out a window looking thoughtfully at something below. Being blessed with a great amount of curiosity, I, too, took a look. There on the campus was only the old colored man who picks up the trash, hard at work.

"Well?" I said with a slight amount of impatience.

"S'funny world, isn't it?" said my friend. "Why can't I be just walking around picking up papers instead of working myself to death at college?"

"Yeah", said I, sympathetically, and wandered on down to the yard, where the old man was busily picking up trash. Upon seeing me, he stopped and rested a while. We talked for a moment, then I said:

"You know, you have an awfully easy time of it—just picking up papers off the campus every day".

"Well, Missus", he said, "I wuz jes' thinkin' how I'd like to be in yo' shoes goin' to school an' learnin' things instead of jes' doin' th' same thing every day."

Yeah! It is a funny world—a world in which poor people want to have money, and rich people want the "happiness of wanting something"—blondes want to be black-headed, and brunettes go peroxide—boys want the "easy" life of the weaker sex, while girls long for the freedom that is boys'—ditch-diggers want the clean life of a "white-collar" man, and the office worker would like the hard, out-door life of a ditch-digger—students wish for the easier life of a professor, while the professor only wishes he could be a student so he wouldn't have to grade so many term papers—the stay-at-home longs for the adventurous life of the wanderer, and the wanderer envies the man who can come home.

S'funny world—where everybody wants to be what everybody else is, and everybody else wants something else.

Yeah! S'funny world all right!

The Balm of Misery

By CORNELIA MERRITT

"—and a good imagination is the balm for all misery."

New York City,
December 16, 1930.

Louisa, my dear:

It was ten years ago tonight that we first saw our wonderful master, Herr Heimholtz. It was discouraging enough to break—But why should I let my thoughts dwell on that when I am now so happy. You have not heard from me, during these ten years because at first there was the work, the climbing, then the equally time-robbing success. It has been wonderful. The bitter starvation and unhappy discouragement of those first years has been repaid thousand fold.

How I do wish you could see my home and taste part of my joy, dear. Since the only part you have known has been the part given out to the general public I will give you the best I can in writing. Perhaps my strength will allow me to finish this picture, perhaps not.

How glad I am I did not stop the struggle as you did that night ten years ago. No doubt you are happy with your lovely little family and I'm so glad your Franz has a garage of his own now. You always thought that Venner man over-worked the boy, I remember. And you have the same little bungalow I imagine. I've pictured you there, Louisa, hundreds of times snug and content. With your good, honest Franz and your sweet-faced children, in that little house in that quiet little village. How near I came to making just such a picture! I heard down at the Opera House not very long ago that William was in New York to confer with some dairymen about some new machine he has invented. Maria Turner had seen him. She says he has a perfect model of an Old Swiss castle on the dairy down there he was

planning when I knew him—ten years ago. Ach Himmel! Imagine even living in a castle on a dairy farm and having one's material desires instantly satisfied. What is that compared with having finally satisfied a longing which has been in one's soul since one was old enough to hear music and to long to express what she felt. There was that inner drive, Louisa, which would not allow me to give up even when the master had told us that we could never be concert nor opera singers. Very soon after you left me I got a place singing in a night club. You alone know to what straits I was driven to accept this job. One night when I was more homesick and weary and lonesome than usual when they called for an encore my mind was so perturbed and before I remembered where I was the role I had been working on all day rushed into my brain and I opened my mouth and started singing "Home to Our Mountains" without any accompaniment. Once I started, I forgot all else. I poured out my whole soul. And Louisa, when I got to the end and looked out and saw tables and food and liquor where I expected a roar of applause from an Opera House, I was so frightened I turned and ran. Before I got to my dressing room some one caught me by the arm. It was Mr. Zolman and he had liked,—did I say liked,—the man was radiant. I'll never forget his expression. He was ordering me to come down the next morning to the offices of the Metropolitan Opera Company. He was telling me I was made! Asking me what roles I knew, under whom had I studied and why had I never done Operatic work. And would I be willing to let them pay me and teach me for a year.

You've probably read all that in the papers and magazines, Louisa, but you

alone could know the joy which filled my entire being when after singing my beloved "Brunhilde" role for Herr Heimholtz and Mr. Zolman, I actually saw the wonderful master clap his sacred little hands in approval and admiration. He said my persistence and my untiring labor had done it. And the discouragement and sadness had given a tone and soulful depth to the voice which only sorrow and suffering can give.

God knows I've suffered! I'll never be rid of this cough. I feel that every coughing spell will tear my lungs out and the draft in this place only makes it worse.

Since that time the road has all been smooth. You may have heard that I have my sisters two little girls over here now. Her husband was killed in the war and she died in Berlin three years ago. They are such a joy to me. The older one is very like my sister, quiet and soft and sweet, but she seems content to arrange flowers for our vases and read her school work, make her surprise dishes for us and play with her two Persian kittens. The younger one is a fiery accomplished violinist. One day she will be very famous. There is an old woman from our little village in Germany who is their nurse so I can very conveniently leave them to go on tours

on concerts. The flowers and the gracious applause have never ceased to rather surprise and to thrill me. Such a loving public and such success are all one could ask for supreme happiness. God has been good to me! Still Brunhilde is my favorite role. Do you remember how you and Franz used to tease me and always call me "Brunie". So for old times sake—shall I sign myself—

Yours affectionately,
"Brunie."

(New York Times, Dec. 17, 1930).

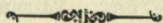
. the body was found on the sidewalk on the street near the rear entrance of the Opera House. Judging by the starved pinched expression of the face the woman evidently died after untold suffering, from the cold or from starvation. Nothing has been ascertained as to her identity beyond the fact that she was a sort of hanger-on about the stage door and the dressing rooms of the opera stars. The doorman at the Opera House is quoted as saying the woman was known about the place as "Brunie" because of a strange mental twist from which she sometimes suffered when she thought herself a famous prima donna, and when she always chose as her favorite role that of Brunhilde.

EDITORIAL

The Arrival of Spring

WHEN fragments of eastern clouds, dripping with golden water, lines the pale blue arch of the sky with a sheen of mellow light, one knows that a morning in spring is quivering in approach just beyond the trees. And what is so lovely as a morning in the waking time of the year—spring! An awakening time it is, indeed, when hearts are aroused by the new bursting life on every side.

The dandelion pushing upward its yellow head tells a story of green things beginning to grow. The pursing buds on the boughs of every tree promise a wealth of summer leaves that will form the delicate instruments for giving the melodies of light winds, which are warning us already that balmy days are nearly here. And the birds in their first joyous symphony insist that spring is beginning. Over all bends a sky which has the blueness that only springtime gives, assuring the world that the moment of waking and feeling has come. With these messengers of spring who can doubt her arrival?



Our Commercial Theatre

“ART, it develops, must still wear patches over its knees if it is to remain pure and unspoiled,” expresses the opinion of Stewart Beach upon the popular feeling that there is something wrong in making money from art.

Only a certain type of drama lover has the idea that the theatre is being stifled and choked by too much struggle for money among producers. The only reason for this thought must be that drama lover has not attended many of the recent plays which have had such success in our country. Mr. Beach believes that for the last decade, New York has displayed more variety, better production and better plays than are to be found in any theatrical capital of Europe or any other continent.

It is very necessary for the producer to consider the commercial side of the theatre problem, since so much is required to show even the simplest play. “Grand Hotel” is said to have required \$60,000 for its

preparation before the curtain could go up for the first time. Less was required for the production of "Green Pastures" because of its great simplicity, and, yet, the cost was such that no producer could afford to lose several times each year.

The success of a play of course depends upon its reception by the public. Since producers wish to keep from losing money, they only sponsor those plays which they judge will be received well. In this way the stage may be kept fairly free from freakish hobbies which crop up in other arts against the will of the public. The producer is able to search around for something original and away from the usual formula.

The most popular plays of the last few years are those which can make high claims to being considered art. Let the complaining drama lover find worthier plays than "Journey's End," "Green Pastures," and others and we shall stop to listen to him, but until then, more power to the commercial producer.

LAVENDER

O little star, so warm and mellow bright,
I watched you long ago
When Daddy told me tales of you,
But oh! I watch you closer now
Because you have him there.
And every night
He opes your yellow windows wide
And throws the curtain back
And whispers softly,
"Goodnight, my child."

—Marion Brown.

LOVE (A DEFINITION)

Love is a baby—
Helpless, sweet, and dear;
Needing care and devotion—
Who puts soft arms
Around your neck—
And presses
Baby kisses on your face . . .

Love is a baby—
Who will leave you
When he grows up . . . !
—By Ida Woodward.

Inspiration—such as that of those who
Have attained the greatest heights
In art, science, and literature.
Where is it to be found?
In nature, lovely faces, or in broken
hearts?

—Frances Zachry.

SLEEP

Droning bees,
Half drooped flowers,
Low chant of drowsy voice
And sultry, listless breeze:
With these
Sweet sleep doth lull
My wearied senses
And drown me in
Soft, warm ease.

—By Marion Brown.

PURPLE PANSIES

When the infinite God in His mercy
Created a pansy flower,
He took all the hurt hearts of mankind,
And He added each tear-stained hour;
He pondered them long and deeply—
The tears, the heartaches of a race—
He blended them all into one superb
thing,
A deep purple pansy face.

LIFE

A little brook
Wandering on
Ends in the sea.

A little life
Wandering on
Ends in misery.
—Anonymous.

CRUCIFIXION

Life was a white rose budding;
Love touched its heart with gold.
Hope kissed each petal to velvet,
Whisp'ring to each to unfold.
Love was a benediction—
The rosebud lifted its head—
Love lived on although you were gone,
And the petals were stained faint with
red.
The world says the rose is more lovely,
And the dew crystals bathe it in tears;
But you know its heart was crucified
When you left it—alone through the
years.

ASK ME NOT AGAIN

Love, I cannot give you more.
Nay, ask me not again.
You have for yours my twisted thoughts,
My lonely sighs, my breaking heart,
My life,—
Nay, leave me hope alone.

—Mildred Barber.

BOOKSHELF

It's A Great War

By MARY LEE

PRE-EMINENT among the many war books that have appeared during the last year is "It's a Great War," written by Mary Lee, a young American girl who saw the war at first hand and has tried to lead us beyond the glamor and romance of war to the true conception of its chaos. There is no organized and neatly-thought-out plot. War is not organized—it moves in jerks. There are moments of intense excitement in which life becomes more real, more vivid. Then there are moments of boredom when life suddenly becomes sluggish and dull. It is during these periods that men are under constant moral and emotional strain, and such moments of inactivity are given much space and consideration by Miss Lee.

Miss Lee has a genius for character portrayal. She pictures some real gentlemen who are strong enough to resist temptations and other men who are weak and break under the tension. The chief protagonist is War itself. In its stupidity and madness it drives men to death or to what is worse—moral corruption or insanity. Lives are jostled by mental and moral forces not their own.

The heroine of the book, Anne Wentworth, served in the war offices at Paris,

in base hospitals, and a Y. W. canteen worker at the front, and after the Armistice, as a reconstruction worker in Germany, and the book is a chronicle of her experiences. She gives little of the actual fighting, but is more concerned with the reaction of the men to that horrible spectacle, war. The hardest thing of all for her and the soldiers who return home is their inability to adapt themselves to their former environment. There is a restlessness and emptiness in life which they can not understand. They feel that all the suffering and fighting have been for naught and that now nothing matters. There is disillusionment and loss of belief in God. Anne's faith never returns. This makes the book more impressive because it shows the irreparable shattering of ideals and faith which results from war.

The style is well-suited to the theme. It is written in short, snatchy sentences, and sometimes phrases, that create the impression of interminable length. And war is interminably long, even if it lasts for only a short time. Miss Lee does not attempt to give all of the details. She chooses those which by their suggestiveness produce the feeling of horror. Altogether, Miss Lee has given us a book which has shorn war of its attractiveness and leaves the impression of truth.

—Kay Dorsey.

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"A Passage to India"

By EDWARD MORGAN FORSTER

AT a time when so much is being said about England's granting dominion status to India, it is most interesting to us who have not known India ourselves, to cast about among the written reactions of others and formulate some conviction of our own.

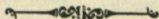
To Kipling, India is a romantic though dangerous adventure; to Miss Mayo, it is a deplorable tragedy. Although Edward Forster, an idle English gentleman, whose home is in a quiet Surrey village, is said to have visited India, the scene of "A Passage to India," only once, his India is neither that of Kipling nor of Katherine Mayo.

The chief concern of the story is the reaction of two newcomers—the mother

of the magistrate and the girl she has brought out with her to marry her magistrate son. Through their reactions are brought out clearly the conflict between India, the romantic and old, and India, the practical and new, the misunderstandings arising when two races live together, and the workings of the Christian, Moslem and Hindu mind.

In the expression of this Forster exhibits his remarkable power in the use of words and color—his sheer artistry. The thing is wondrously and delicately done. His insight is keen in the characters of men and the irony of the situations in which they find themselves, but we feel that this work is primarily that of a sensitive artist.

—Cornelia Merritt.



Visitors to Hugo

By ALICE GRANT ROSMAN

AN interesting story of a young man who is confined to his bed for a half year because of an automobile wreck. During this time he learns to analyze his friends and his family.

Hugo, the young man, decides that his mother, Lady Donaldson, rather enjoys his illness, in that she has a chance to dress him in pale blue pajamas to match a charmingly decorated room.

Among his friends we find many interesting characters, as Bunny Molyneux, who, Hugo says, "is no rabbit." It is she who is jilted by Paul, a friend of Hugo's, and in order to protect her from the criticism and sympathy of his mother and some of her friends, Hugo becomes engaged to her and finds that

he is really in love with her. Lady Eleanor Wise, a great aunt of Hugo's, is described in a clever way as "one who goes everywhere, knows everyone and says everything."

Along with the presentation of the troubles of Hugo, we find a story about the marriage of the man who jilted Bunny. He is disowned by his family and is sent to prison for a crime which he did not commit. His wife, Helen, is employed by Lady Donaldson to read to Hugo each day. And it is she who makes Hugo's father forgive him and help her husband to start again.

Mrs. Rosman has given to her readers a very clever story of a boy who sees the villainy of his elders and attempts to correct it.

—Frances Zachry.

THE RAMBLER

SOMEHOW, we feel this month rather like shirking books and papers and parallel and rambling along the quiet country byways. Personally we can't quite agree with Mr. Hazlitt, who liked to go his journeys alone, but we do admit that Georgia woods at this time of the year are companion enough. There's a certain grey squirrel that comes to meet us every time that we take a certain path, and somehow we feel that his little black, beady eyes are reproaching us, though we can never decide just whether it is for encroaching on his territory or for deserting our pursuit after knowledge. There is a certain sense of being left out when a great big fluff of a white cloud goes scurrying right past the class room window just when you are trying hardest to concentrate on chemistry. Why do we have to go to school indoors? Why can't we instigate outdoor classes? Why, oh tell us why, we can't study violets and honeysuckle instead of frogs and problematic children? But, speaking of avenues of escape, there are so many delightful paths that one may follow when out for a walk that it is hard to choose. There is one though, that we never tire of traveling and it is the one that leads past a small brick house with a garden beneath pine trees just to the side of it. There are tulips, hyacinths, narcissus, daffodils, and a rock border of the loveliest lavender-pink thrift. We could live out the rest of our lives in comfort right there if the flowers just kept on

blooming, but to proceed a little farther. Follow the road for a mile or two and you will come to a thicket of pines set back from the highway where the earth is simply starred with easter lilies. There is, too, just a faint trace of a perfume that is so delicate and elusive that it will keep you guessing for a while. It comes from a crab apple tangle off to one side, and if you want the thrill of a lifetime, go up to where you can see the pale satin buds.

That road lacks one thing, though, that to some people keeps it from being perfect. You can go to the very end of it and you will not find a stream running across it. If, however, you chance to be a fish enthusiast and running water means perfection to you, there is another road for you. It winds around through pine groves till you almost meet yourself coming back. If you go along it for just a shot distance you will find two streams where the sunlight turns the minnows darting about in it to gold. There will be easter lilies there, too, and there will be the added attraction of a nursery where the roses always bloom early.

Then there is the road that you can travel to find big lavender violets with one purple petal and the one little spot where the blood root blooms. But, choose the road and the companions that you will if you wander around Wesleyan in the spring you will come to the same conclusion that I have—rambling is a pleasant occupation.

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EXCHANGES

The Corinthian came rolling in this month with some stories of very promising style. It is the only magazine containing an exchange page that we have received. We especially liked this poem from the Corinthian:

MYSTERIES

A pink cloud sailed above me,
A silver star stood by,
The pine trees looked down at me
And I thought I heard them sigh.

But why should they sigh together
When a breeze drifts over the sea?
They're nearer, much nearer to heaven
Than the poet, the dreamer, like me.

What mean the stars in heaven?
And what is the fading of day?
And what is the living of people?
And what is the calling of May?

The mysteries of life are unending—
Farther than I can see—
And pine trees will keep on sighing
Unravelling by dreams like me.

—K. Laurence.

We wish to acknowledge the following exchanges:

The Subemeco, Sue Bennet College,
London, Ky.

The Coraddi, N. C. College for
Women.

The Corinthian, G. S. C. W.

The Erothesian, Lander College.

The Distaff, F. S. C. W.

The Quill, Howard College.

The Subemeco offers quite a variety of literary compositions. We liked the poetry, but the stories seem to be the weakest of the collection. Of all their poems we liked this one best:

FADING FIRELIGHT

As languid shadows flit
Nonchalantly to and fro,
And transient ghosts loom
In the yellow of the glow

I listen to the lipping flames
As they murmur soft and low
And the embers crumble and fall
To the hearth below.

I feel the chill of the night
When the last gallant spark
Winds its way up to God
And leaves me in the dark.

—W. Hopkins.

The Quill is also a creditable literary publication which we will look forward to with pleasure. We are glad to quote:

BLINDING

The new moon, like a shaving
Planed from a silver cloud,
Drifts down the velvet darkness
Surrounded by a crowd
Of sparks from the conflagration
That blazed at setting sun;
So, cloud and moon, sun and stars,
Day and night are one.

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ATLANTA

An endless stretch of white sand
An uncertain night

A thin moon, a sleepy star breathing
In the cold, stern stillness.

The wind at the other end of the world.
You and I alone, and you're asleep.

—Mildred Barber.

SIMILARITY

A flickering candle glowing in the open
Where its flame is carried high
And again it is carried low and almost
dies.

A little human being in a vast area
Where his life is one glorious song
And again it is of a wailing minor key.

—Frances Zachry, '32.

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